

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

INFORMATION

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

April 21, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER  
SUBJECT: Lon Nol's Resignation

(signed) EK

Attached is a brief report from Mr. Ladd concerning the resignation of Lon Nol. Mr. Ladd indicates that:

- although appreciative of the continuing expressions of support for him, Lon Nol will probably stick to his decision to resign. He may, however, intend to keep the principal reins in his hands from behind the scenes and re-enter the political arena at a later time;
- the situation appears to be fully under control;
- Lon Nol will soon be sending you a personal message assuring you that there will be no change in the thrust of the Khmer program.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS  
APPLY

Attachment  
Phnom Penh 1563 (Tab A)

HAK:JTH:ms:4/21/71

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

21 April 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Brigadier General Alexander M. Haig  
Deputy Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs

The following message (Phnom Penh 1563) from Mr. Ladd for  
Brigadier General Haig was received this morning, 21 April 1971.

"Top Secret Sensitive Exclusively Eyes Only

"To: Brig. Gen. Haig, The White House

"From: Mr. Ladd, Phnom Penh 1563

"1. I talked to Gen. Sak Sutsakhan at noon today 21 April. He and the other principal Generals not signatories to the letter protesting Gen. Lon Nol's resignation were, repeat were, aware that it was being prepared and concurred in the project as an expression of loyalty by representatives of all elements of the FANK. In their own way, they felt such a letter should not contain the signatures of all responsible senior officers 'as it might be misconstrued by someone as a threat of some sort that the military might take some unilateral action.' Although all of the senior officers have intense loyalty to the General, they believed the action taken was 'more democratic.'

"2. At 1600 this afternoon I learned that following the bicameral meeting of the Assembly and Senate this morning, Cheng Heng went to Gen. Lon Nol to request that he reconsider his resignation and form a new government. There has not been time for an answer to be delivered but my guess is that Lon Nol will thank the two houses for their loyalty but stick to his decision to resign.

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"3. The more often I talk to Sak Sutsakhan and as the events unfold, it appears that although Lon Nol is serious about resigning for reasons of health, he intends to keep 'the principal reins in his hands from behind the wings' and reenter the political arena at a later time.

"4. Although the present procedure may seem to westerners to be an unnecessarily complex system of accomplishing certain changes in government, the orientals have some strange political procedures that seem to make sense to them and often in the long run work rather well. This may be one of those strange maneuvers and all indications are that it is fully under control so far.

"5. Sak Sutsakhan said to pass on to you that Gen. Lon Nol will soon be sending a personal message to the President assuring him that there will be no change in the thrust of the Khmer program along with his thanks for all we have done and are doing for the GKR.

"6. I will keep you informed. All is calm and normal at this time. Warm regards.

"Top Secret Sensitive Exclusively Eyes Only"



Thomas H. Karamessines  
Deputy Director for Plans